

Message Text

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OECD

SUBJECT: SEMINAR ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MULTINA-
TIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNCS) NOVEMBER 1974, EAST LANSING,
MICHIGAN

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY IS GRATIFIED THAT THROUGH
THE COOPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND MICHIGAN
STATE A SERIOUS EXAMINATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
AND THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN
AT THE SUBJECT SEMINAR. END SUMMARY

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2. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IN VIEW OF THE VERY IMPORTANT ROLE WHICH MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS PLAY IN THE UK, AND IN PARTICULAR THE VERY CRITICAL AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THESE BODIES, THAT THERE BE A BROAD CROSS-SECTIONAL REPRESENTATION AT THE SEMINAR FROM THE UK. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE TRANSMIT THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS CONCERNING PARTICIPANTS, SEVERAL OF WHOM ARE DESCRIBED IN STATE'S 047322.

3. TRADE UNION PARTICIPATION - DAVID LEA, AS CHIEF ECONOMIST FOR THE TUC, IS CONSIDERED TOGETHER WITH LEN MURRAY, TUC GENERAL SECRETARY, THE MAJOR ARTICULATOR OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT'S BROAD ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS POLICY. SINCE THE LABOR GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE, THEIR VIEWS HAVE ASSUMED GREATER RELEVANCE WITHIN THE TUC-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCILS. IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT LEN MURRAY HIMSELF MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FOR THE SEMINAR, WHICH WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT IDEA, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT OF COURSE EXPLORED THE POSSIBILITY WITH HIM. IN ANY EVENT, WE RECOMMEND LEA AS A PARTICIPANT.

4. ACADEMIC AND GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION - EITHER WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, PROFESSOR OF LAW AT LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, OR DEREK ROBINSON, FORMERLY AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY (DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE PAY BOARD), ARE ARTICULATE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE EXPERTS IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS. BOTH HAVE CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE IN TRADE UNION AND INDUSTRY CIRCLES. WEDDERBURN IS CURRENTLY KEY ADVISER TO THE TUC ON PROPOSALS FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT, WHICH MAY COVER CERTAIN ASPECTS OF RELATIONS WITH MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS. ROBINSON HAS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE GENERAL LABOR-MANAGEMENT SCENE IN HIS CAPACITY AS NUMBER TWO MAN ON THE PAY BOARD AND WAS KEY AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADVISING THE GOVERNMENT ON THE MAJOR RELATIVITIES AND ANOMALIES ISSUES WHICH AROSE UNDER GOVERNMENT INCOMES POLICY. A THIRD ACADEMIC EXPERT IN THIS FIELD IS THE INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN PROFESSOR BEN ROBERTS, WHO HAS PARTICIPATED FREQUENTLY IN DISCUSSIONS ON MULTINATIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CORPORATIONS. WE BELIEVE ANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS WOULD BE A USEFUL CHOICE.

5. INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS - IF MICHAEL CLAPHAM, WHO IS BOTH DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES AND PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY IS UNAVAILABLE, WE SUGGEST CAMPBELL ADAMSON, CBI DIRECTOR GENERAL (SENIOR STAFF OFFICIAL), WOULD BE A

GOOD SUBSTITUTE. ADAMSON HAS IN FACT PARTICIPATED AS THE CBI REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMMITTEE FOR DEALING WITH MULTINATIONALS WITHIN THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NEDC) AND IS HIGHLY REGARDED NOT ONLY IN INDUSTRY BUT AMONG MANY TRADE UNIONISTS, AND SINCE HE BECAME THE TOP STAFF OFFICIAL OF THE CBI, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TUC AND THE CBI HAVE IN FACT IMPROVED.

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